

Better Infrastructure for Mental Health Services

Better psychosocial health improves lives of vulnerable groups in eastern Ukraine



The challenge: Many people in need – too few resources

Since 2014, millions of Ukrainians have been affected by the armed conflict in the east of the country. Many people have developed psychological problems as a result of displacement and experiences of violence. State and non-state institutions frequently lack the resources needed to provide mental health and psychosocial well-being services. This is especially the case in communities hosting internally displaced people (IDPs) and communities in rural areas. As a result, vulnerable population groups suffer the most: IDPs may live safely in a new home, but they are often isolated and lack prospects. Children and young people, meanwhile, have been traumatised by the conflict, while people with disabilities, senior citizens, war veterans and their families continue to struggle with its psychological impact.

Earning a living in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine was hard before 2014, and has become even harder in the aftermath of the conflict. Additionally, the population was badly hit by the economic crisis. As a result, many live below the poverty line.

Project title:	Developing Service Structures and Training Capacities for Psychosocial Support in Eastern Ukraine
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Project area:	Government controlled areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions
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Today, population groups compete for limited public services, which increases the potential for conflict and makes it harder to integrate IDPs into their host communities. These are serious obstacles for the socio-economic development of the region.

Our approach: Providing faster assistance to more people

On behalf of the German government, GIZ strengthens structures for psychosocial services in selected communities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. GIZ is working with regional and municipal administrations, as well as non-governmental organisations and local universities, to incorporate psychosocial services into local structures. Psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers and specialists are receiving training to deepen their core skills, thus expanding counselling and support services. Cooperation among Ukrainian and international actors is also being strengthened to create synergies and use resources more efficiently. Additionally, young professionals, such as psychologists and social workers, will benefit from the introduction of new concepts in education, which will increase the reach of psychological and psychosocial services in eastern Ukraine.



Training on efficient correction programmes for psychologists working with perpetrators of domestic violence

Dialogue and constructive interactions between people are vital when it comes to strengthening psychological and self-healing capabilities of individuals, groups and communities. GIZ and its partners are therefore putting in place the foundations for support mechanisms and community-based approaches for social cohesion. Improved, needs-oriented psychosocial support services are being made available to more people, thus giving them a better chance to process traumatic experiences and embark on the recovery process.

Support services are also made available to social workers and psychologists, allowing them to protect themselves and their team during their work.



Psychosocial support for the most vulnerable



Raising awareness about gender-based and domestic violence with a mural in eastern Ukraine



Tetyana Dontsova:

“We have learned to take better care of ourselves”

Tetyana Dontsova works as psychologist with the charity “Vostok-SOS”. Along with medical and social workers, she helps the most vulnerable with psychosocial support. She knows what it is like to work under pressure:

“In stressful situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, specialists help the ones in need to overcome their problems, but they also face significant psychological pressure themselves. Thanks to the new telephone hotline and psychological seminars, we have learned to take better care of ourselves to prevent burnout and receive support in this stressful situation, as well as getting answers to our most pressing questions.”

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